



American Council of the Blind

October 10, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: **WC Docket No. 02- 307**
Joint Application By Bellsouth Corporation For Authorization Under Section 271
Of The Communications Act To Provide In- Region, Interlata Service In The
States Of Florida And Tennessee

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The American Council of the Blind, along with the American Association of People with Disabilities and TDI (formerly Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.), are pleased to submit comments in support of BellSouth's filing requesting FCC authorization to provide in-region, interLATA services in Florida and Tennessee. We believe that all Florida and Tennessee residents, including those with disabilities, will benefit from BellSouth's entry in these long distance markets.

As we have seen in other states where Bell companies have entered the long distance market, increased competition has brought consumers numerous benefits including greater choice, convenience, lower prices and increased infrastructure investment for the deployment of advanced technologies. For example, more competition has led to a greater number of pricing plans and lower overall costs for consumers. Such savings are very important to Americans with disabilities, as many tend to be on fixed or limited incomes.

We anticipate that BellSouth's long distance entry will also lead to additional investment in and deployment of advanced telecommunications services. These services can significantly enhance the lives of Americans with disabilities by providing life-long learning opportunities, increasing the quality of health care, promoting independent living and reducing isolation.

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We are confident that BellSouth's entrance into the Florida and Tennessee long distance markets will strengthen its commitment to making communications technologies available, affordable and accessible to Americans with disabilities. We, therefore, urge the FCC to approve BellSouth's application to provide long distance service in these states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles H. Crawford".

Charles H. Crawford
Executive Director

Andrew J. Imparato
President and CEO
American Association of People with Disabilities

Claude Stout
Executive Director
TDI